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Tougher Fines for Methamphetamine Producers

Legislation will help protect public health and safety

LANSING — Fines and penalties in Michigan will increase for people who participate in the production of methamphetamine under a package of seven bills passed today in the Senate.

“The production and use of meth is a burden to families and the healthcare system,” said bill sponsor Sen. Tom George (R-Texas Twp.) “At the hospital where I work, our burn unit has treated two patients recently, one a child, for severe burns received when meth labs exploded in their homes. Although we can treat these victims, the best treatment is to prevent the labs from being created in the first place.”

Methamphetamine is a growing concern throughout Michigan with clandestine labs being found in rural and city areas, barns, garages, apartments, storage areas and vehicles. The production of methamphetamine can cause serious environmental risks since the toxic waste produced is often dumped in public sewer systems or directly on the ground.

In addition, production of meth can result in fires or explosions, injuring or killing law enforcement agents and fire personnel who respond to the scene of a meth lab.

The package of bills includes provisions that:

- Prohibit the possession of more than 12 grams of pseudoephedrine (with the exception of pediatric products), a chemical used in the production of methamphetamine;
- Increase to 20 years imprisonment the maximum penalty for those owning or possessing the places, chemicals or equipment used in production of the illegal stimulant;
- Create a new crime with a maximum penalty of four years imprisonment for people who transport anhydrous ammonia in unapproved containers;

- Require inspection of property used as a clandestine lab for the production of methamphetamine to determine if there is contamination, and require public warnings if any is discovered.

Meth is highly addictive,” said George. “These bills will reduce the production by making it harder to obtain its key ingredients.”

Senate Bills 648-652, 698 and 777 now go to the House for consideration.

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Comments from Sen. George on the Methamphetamine Penalties are available for download on the Senate Majority Audiowire at www.senate.michigan.gov/gop or by calling the radio hotline at 517-373-4000.